

Visual and Performing Arts Framework for California Public Schools

Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve

DRAFT

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INTRODUCTION

A discussion about the arts is a discussion about people. It is about how people communicate their perceptions, responses, and understandings of the world to themselves and to others. The story of the arts began more than 35,000 years ago and has been evolving ever since, exhibiting the ability of humans to intuit, symbolize, think, and express themselves through dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts. Each of the arts contains a distinct body of knowledge and skills that characterize the power of each to expand the perceptual, intellectual, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of human experience.

This capacity of human beings to create and appreciate the arts is just one of many reasons to teach the arts in the schools. Study and practice in the arts refine students' abilities to perceive aesthetically, to make connections between works of art and the lives people live, and to discuss visual, kinesthetic, and auditory relationships. Students learn to locate works of art in time and place, make reasoned judgments about them, and investigate how artworks create meaning.

This framework for the twenty-first century acknowledges that the arts enhance and balance curriculum. It implements the visual and performing arts content standards adopted by the State Board of Education in January 2001, which express in the highest form what students are to know and be able to do in the arts.

The standards were developed in response to Senate Bill 1390 (Murray), signed by Governor Gray Davis in September 2000. That bill calls for the adoption of visual and performing arts content standards by the California State Board of Education and states that instruction in the visual and performing arts should be made available to all students. However, as with standards in other curriculum areas, the bill does not require schools to follow the content standards and does not mandate an assessment of pupils in the visual and performing arts. As stated in the bill, the content standards are intended to provide a framework for programs that a school may offer in the instruction of visual and performing arts (*Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards for California Public*

Schools, Prekindergarten Through Grade Twelve, p. ix). The content standards tell what students in California are to know and be able to do in the different disciplines of the arts.

The *Visual and Performing Arts Framework* is designed to guide teachers in the development of curriculum and instruction to ensure that all students meet or exceed the content standards in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts. It also provides guidance in implementing and evaluating an arts education program in a school or school district.

More specifically, the framework:

- Presents guiding principles for instruction in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts (Chapter 1)
- Guides the planning, implementation, and evaluation of standards-based visual and performing arts education programs (Chapter 2)
- Presents the key content standards for kindergarten through grade eight that provide a beginning point for standards-based instruction; the complete content standards in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts for kindergarten through grade twelve; and the standards for the beginning or proficient level and advanced level for grades nine through twelve (Chapter 3)
- Guides curriculum development for standards-based visual and performing arts education programs (Chapter 4)
- Provides information on the role and forms of assessment in the arts (Chapter 5)
- Presents details on teacher preparation and professional development for each arts discipline (Chapter 6)
- Provides criteria for the evaluation of instructional materials in the arts for kindergarten through grade eight (Chapter 7)